



**Montgomery County Commission on Veterans Affairs  
Summary Meeting Minutes  
June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2010**

**I. Call to Order & Introductions:** Bill Gray, Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Commission on Veterans Affairs (CVA). Bill asked for all present to please stand for a moment of silence for all of those who have given their lives and those who have been wounded for our country in the different conflicts in which our country has been engaged in and to remain standing for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**II. Approval of Minutes:** Bill Gray, Chair, made the following changes to the May Meeting Summary Minutes: Robert Brudno, former U.S. Navy Officer was not a prisoner of war (POW). His brother Alan was a POW for 7 ½ years and he committed suicide four months after returning home. Mike Subin, Commissioner, moved to approve the May Meeting Summary Minutes with the necessary corrections. Rich Fales, Commissioner, seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the May Meeting Summary Minutes were unanimously approved with the corrections. Approved minutes will be online at [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cva](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cva).

**III. Developing a Strategy to Have a Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) Located in Montgomery County – The Honorable Duchy Trachtenberg, Councilmember, Montgomery County Council**

Councilmember Duchy Trachtenberg has two family members that have served in the Armed Forces, one of whom receives care from Veterans Affairs (VA) for a service-connected disability. These personal ties provide her with a perspective for policy and funding issues. She is also a social worker by training. She understands that veterans in Montgomery County have many unmet needs. Many conversations have taken place regarding the need for a Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) in Montgomery County, mainly about the resources and funding required.

Councilmember Trachtenberg suggested that the Commission think outside of the box and consider pursuing a private-public partnership. One example of this model already being used by Montgomery County is the Family Justice Center, which is a collaboration of public and private county agencies seeking to provide services to families impacted by domestic violence. The County pays the lease and the positions from the State's Attorney and Sheriff's office are Federally and State funded. Within one year, the Center saw 1,500 families. Perhaps the County can establish a private-public partnership for the interim in lieu of a CBOC. Councilmember Trachtenberg has been in contact with several public health schools, such as Johns Hopkins University (JHU) and George Washington University (GWU). Both schools have shown an interest in collaborating with the County to provide services to veterans. A needs assessment can be conducted with the help of students as part of their practicum for a graduate study program. If schools are contacted in September, the assessment could possibly be completed by December. Students could also assist with filling out grant applications. Pete Esker, Commissioner, suggested applying for a grant to conduct the needs assessment.

The first step for developing a CBOC would be to develop a needs assessment of veterans in Montgomery County. The assessment will give us a sense of demographics and where the greatest need in the County is. Data sets are available from the VA and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

(SAMHSA). All information is public knowledge. SAMHSA conducted a survey on drug use between 2004 – 2007 and 2007 – 2010. The national data is broken down by state. From the data, approximately 25% of veterans returning from Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) have had a major depressive episode in the last year that has required a hospitalization. Hospital data sets are also available, and these records will indicate whether or not a person was referred to a VA hospital or has insurance coverage through the VA.

Jackie Ogg, Commissioner, noted that the Community Foundation for the National Region conducted a [Troops and Family Care Fund Feasibility Study](#) in 2008 for OIF and OEF. From that study, it is estimated that 36,967 soldiers had “ever deployed” and an estimated 6,020 were “currently deployed” to either or both Afghanistan and Iraq from the National Capital Region. Of those “ever deployed”, 5,320 are from Montgomery and Prince George’s Counties. Jackie and Commissioners Susan Kirk and Lorrie-Knight Major have met with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, which seeks to improve the health and health care of all Americans, about applying for a matching grant to fund the cost for a facility. Express priority is given to veterans. The needs of veterans and their families is so great that it cannot be met all within the military, and requires the support of community-based non-profits. Currently, there is no referral pipeline between the military and these non-profits.

Greg Hamilton, Active Participant, said there are 62,000 veterans in Montgomery County. Vietnam Veterans are an aging population that will require more support. The CBOC would also need a Veterans Service Officer for intake due to Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and confidentiality laws. The Commission should also look at Community Development Block Grant Funds. Ken Barnum, Outreach Worker for DC VA Medical Center, agreed that a needs assessment will help to justify the need for a CBOC in Montgomery County. Greg suggested renaming the facility from a CBOC to a Veterans Outreach Technical Assistance Center.

Sharon Hodge, Commissioner, noted that if the County is to establish a CBOC, they must go through the Veteran Integrated Service Network (VISN). The VA completed a needs assessment of Maryland, District of Columbia, Virginia, and West Virginia. Montgomery County did not show up to the table, hence why other areas have CBOCs. Also, Montgomery County is viewed as having more funds available than other counties.

Jane McCarthy, Commissioner, has been working with Delegate Karen Montgomery and the Montgomery General Hospital (MGH) Mental Health Department for the past few years. MGH was interested in providing services to veterans. The VA may be open to collaborating with MGH now as they have begun to contract with Kaiser Permanente and other hospitals. Jane will send the information to Councilmember Trachtenberg, who will contact MGH.

The County could also work with clinical Federal employees that have a requirement to log volunteer service and hours. The administrative and oversight support staff for the CBOC could be provided by the County with the clinical positions being supplemented by volunteers. An outpatient facility should include a primary health function as well as provide behavioral health services. The issue is where to host this facility. Funding may be available through the County, or there are foundations available throughout the U.S. that assists with funding for clinical sites and administrative support.

Ann Humphrey, Office of Rep. Chris Van Hollen, said that Congressman Van Hollen contacted Fernando Rivera, Director of the VA Medical Center in DC, about having a psychiatrist available at the Silver Spring Vet Center. They rejected the idea of having a physical presence, but are open to the idea of teleconferencing. Mariam Chase, Behavioral Health, noted she recently attended a State conference where the VA discussed treating veterans via telehealth in St. Mary’s and Washington Counties and the

Eastern Shore. Telehealth is the delivery of health-related services and information via telecommunications technologies. She added that through the Maryland Commitment for Veterans, the Core Service Agency and the Veterans Collaborative have developed the curriculum for a certification program for 100 Maryland clinicians to treat veterans. These clinicians work with the Pro Bono Center in Baltimore and can be utilized in Montgomery County.

Councilmember Trachtenberg will offer her support for a private-public partnership initiative and continue to work on this issue.

#### **IV. Chair and Vice Chair Report:**

The renaming of the Rockville Library to the Rockville Memorial Library was held on May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Bill Gray, Chair, recently attended a follow-up meeting for the event. It was suggested to have a permanent television in the lobby of the Rockville Memorial Library with a running scroll of Montgomery County military men and women who died during service. The Commission was asked to provide the funds for the television. Pete Esker, Commissioner, made a motion for the Commission to write a letter to the County Executive requesting funds for a 24" or 30" television to be installed in the Rockville Memorial Library. Mike Subin, Commissioner, seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.

Victor Salazar, from the Silver Spring Civic Building (SSCB), contacted Bill about having the Commission put the word out about the need for volunteers to be present at the SSCB during the evening hours to provide information and keep watch. Mr. Salazar is calling his volunteer initiative "Boots on the Ground". Individuals interested in volunteering may contact Mr. Salazar at 301-565-5847 (V) or e-mail [Victor.Salazar@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:Victor.Salazar@montgomerycountymd.gov).

There are no meetings in July or August for summer recess. A meeting about the CBOC will be held in July. Date to be determined.

**V. Project Updates:** None.

**VI. Updates / Motions for Commission Action:** None.

#### **VII. Roundtable:**

Ann Humphrey noted that Congressman Van Hollen received notice today that the Dept. of Labor has awarded \$499,695 to Easter Seals. Easter Seals will provide job training and placement for veterans who recently separated from the military within 48 months and have a service-connected disability of 30% or greater. Easter Seals is contributing \$25,000 towards the grant. The program is expected to serve 177 veterans. Lorrie Knight-Major will be the contact person.

**Adjournment:** 7:30pm

**Next Full Commission Meeting:** Tuesday, September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2010, from 6:00pm to 7:30pm at 401 Hungerford Drive, Rockville, MD in the 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Tan Conference Room.

Respectively submitted,  
Carly Clem, OSC  
Betsy Luecking, Staff Liaison